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Synopses of Important Articles.

The Gospel of John.* The Tübingen school of critics would have us believe that the early Christians were distinguished above all other men for their rascality. Their theory is that the early Church was divided into two great parties, that of Peter on one side and that of Paul on the other. The feud was healed in the latter part of the second century by an unknown writer who wrote, in the name of John, the Fourth Gospel. This writing, borrowing its material from the synoptics, but remodeling and transforming it in accordance with a great idea, reconciled the disputants and laid the basis of Catholic unity. A wonderful achievement—to transport oneself into a bygone age and reproduce its spirit and life down to the minutest particular! But apart from the internal evidence, what does history say about the origin and use of this Gospel? (1) Polycarp (A. D. 69–156) knows nothing of the disputes between Peter and Paul. He speaks of Paul with the highest respect in his epistle. But Polycarp, on the testimony of Irenaeus, his pupil, was a disciple and friend of the Apostle John, and hence would be likely to side against Paul. (2) Irenaeus wrote a book against heresies about 182 A. D. in which he quotes from the Fourth Gospel as that of John, and uses it as an authority against errors of doctrine. Hence it must have been in use and in honor a long time before his day. (3) Tatian, writing about A. D. 170, undoubtedly quotes from this Gospel. His Diatessaron or combination of the Gospels manifestly contains as one of its constituents the Fourth Gospel. This Diatessaron has been recently discovered in an Arabic translation. (4) Justin Martyr, who died about the middle of the second century, makes certain quotations from what he calls the memoirs of the Apostles and their companions. Some of these quotations can fairly be explained only as coming from this Gospel. (5) Thus the date of the Fourth Gospel is brought within the first half of the second century, and it is so near the times of the Apostles and their immediate companions that no such forgery such as the Tübingen school claim could be made. It must have been written by the Apostle whose name it bears.

The external evidence for the apostolic origin of the Fourth Gospel is very clearly and simply put in this article. Of course clearness and simplicity in these complicated questions are obtained by omitting much that is pertinent to the question and by making positive statements on details where others would hold that there is room for doubt. Prof. Crooks has rightly emphasized the importance of the material in Justin Martyr. Here is one of the difficult and at the same time fundamental points to establish. It will be established, but the truth is that the victory is as yet by no means won. This article is useful as opening up to the student the questions at issue from a reverent and conservative standpoint.

St. John's Argument from Miracles.† John 20 : 30, 31 implies two things : (a) that John's Gospel is not merely a sweet evangel, but an argument with a purpose ; (b) that this argument uses as its chief element the miracles of Jesus.

* By Rev. George R. Crooks, D. D., in the *Methodist Review*, Jan., 1891, pp. 9–26.

† By L. G. Barbour, D. D., in the *Presbyterian Quarterly*, Jan., 1891, pp. 1–32.

These miracles, carefully examined, reveal that a unique supernatural force has been at work in the realm of matter and disclose a gradation of power from lower to higher. (1) The walking on the sea is in the realm of the universal force of gravitation. (2) The turning of water into wine is a deed done in the sphere of vegetable life which cannot be explained by modern science. (3) The multiplying of the loaves and fishes discloses a miracle in a sphere in which more of human labor is required than in the making of wine, in which very complex bodies—according to science—are manipulated, and in which animal food is introduced. (4) The healing of the nobleman's son, of the infirm man at the pool of Bethesda and of the man born blind introduce us to the realm of human life. With all the advance in medical science no such power as this here displayed can be manifested. (5) The raising of Lazarus is the bringing back of life to the body. Science cannot tell what life is, much less restore it to the dead body. (6) The resurrection of Christ is the highest miracle of all. It was something which he claimed to have power to do, and on which he staked the truth of his work.

This is the miracle argument of John. It comprises facts taken from the life of Christ, each of which is not opposed to science, yet cannot be duplicated by science; each of which is within the range of the common humble untrained observation of the disciples and others of that day. How can we explain it that, touching nature at so many points in these narratives, John nowhere makes mistakes? Notice how circumstantial John is in these accounts. He was a part of the scenes he describes. Consider how calm and unstrained is his narrative. He could not have been deceived, surely not a deceiver.

There is much that is interesting in this article, but the author's point of view is all wrong. There was no such argument as he imagines that he has discovered. The miracles were put in the Gospel for no such purpose as that he has so laboriously traced. No doubt the writer's views about these miracles are all valid and useful. But they were not John's views. If the reader of this article will remember this fundamental misconception of the writer, the reading of the article will afford him much interest, and, perhaps, be profitable to him. If such a reading should induce some one to take up and study the real facts about John's argument from miracles, it would be worth doing indeed. The subject is a fresh one, and one to which little attention has been paid.

The Present Relation of the False Religions to Christianity.* Many people are afraid to study heathen religions for fear that they will prove dangerous rivals to Christianity. The fact is that the case with them is the same as that with the religions of Greece and Rome. The latter we know thoroughly and hence do not fear. So must we know the Oriental religions. But this knowledge must be thorough, not partial. Christian teachers and scholars of old have not hesitated to study false religions. It is absolutely necessary to-day that missionaries should be familiar with the religious views of those whom they would reach. Otherwise they are liable to be surprised by the resemblances between Christianity and Heathenism, or unable to grasp the essential differences between them. There are many varieties of Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism. Teachers of the Gospel must be able to get the rubbish out of the way that thus the truth may enter. They must get at the heathen's standpoint. Especially is this true to-day because of a revival of heathenism in the Orient. Missionary work in some of its features is becoming an intense

* By F. F. Ellinwood, D. D., in the *Homiletic Review*, April, 1891, pp. 291-300.